

# Aconcagua



## 2009 Expedition

### Information Package #1

The following information is only a guide to be used with your personal knowledge in planning for the upcoming expedition. The information provided is preliminary and subject to change at any time. Climbers should pay special attention to any highlighted items.

## Expedition Details

Expedition: Aconcagua 2009 Expedition  
Leader: Randall Chamberlain (Aconcagua 2008)  
Routes: Polish Glacier, Polish Glacier Direct or False Polish Traverse  
Dates: December 17, 2009 to January 8, 2010

## Insurance

Climbers wishing to obtain international travel and medical insurance should ensure their policy covers mountaineering activities and includes mountain rescue with no altitude limitation. In Canada, this insurance can be obtained from [Travel Underwriters](#) (1-800-663-0399) and purchased through any [Allstate](#) agent. Travel Underwriters insurance also includes trip cancellation insurance that must be purchased within 48 hours of booking flights and/or paying for the expedition. Residents of the United States can obtain insurance through the [American Alpine Institute](#). Helicopter evacuation from base camp at Plaza Argentina is included in the cost of your climbing permit if requested by the base camp physician, however, any other costs associated with a rescue or early evacuation from the expedition are the climber's expense. Climbers may also wish to obtain insurance on their climbing gear, if possible, as gear has been lost during mule accidents at river crossings.

## Cost (Estimated)

**\$1,100 US each**

(min. 4 climbers, hostel accommodations, slightly higher for hotels)

## Deposit

A non-refundable deposit of \$250.00 US per climber is required with the balance of the expedition fee due in full by September 15, 2009. Those wishing to withdraw from the expedition will receive a refund based on the following schedule:

Full refund, less non-refundable deposit, if withdrawing before September 15, 2009.

Partial refund (50%), less non-refundable deposit, if withdrawing before November 10, 2009.

No refunds after November 10, 2009.

## Expedition Itinerary

Day	Date	Itinerary
1	Dec 16	Fly out from your city of departure (overnight flight)
2	Dec 17	Arrive in Mendoza and check into hostel or hotel
3	Dec 18	Rest day, get climbing permits, food, fuel and do a final gear check
4	Dec 19	Travel from Mendoza to Los Penitentes and check into hotel
5	Dec 20	Drive to Punta de Vacas and walk to Pampa Lenas (6-7 hrs, 8,860')
6	Dec 21	Walk to Casa Piedras (6 hrs, 10,500')
7	Dec 22	Walk to base camp, Plaza Argentina (6 hrs, 13,800')
8	Dec 23	Rest day
9	Dec 24	Carry load to Camp 1 (16,500) and return to base camp (13,800)
10	Dec 25	Move to Camp 1 (16,500')
11	Dec 26	Rest day
12	Dec 27	Carry load to Camp 2 (19,300') and return to Camp 1 (16,500)
13	Dec 28	Move to Camp 2 (19,300)
14	Dec 29	Rest day
15	Dec 30	Summit day (22,840') and return to Camp 2 (19,300),
16	Dec 31	Summit day or extra day for inclement weather or acclimatization if required
17	Jan 1	Summit day or extra day for inclement weather or acclimatization if required
18	Jan 2	Summit day or extra day for inclement weather or acclimatization if required
19	Jan 3	Return to base camp (13,800)
20	Jan 4	Return to Pampa Lenas (8,860')
21	Jan 5	Return to Mendoza, check into hostel or hotel
22	Jan 6	Day in Mendoza for shopping, wine tasting, etc.
23	Jan 7	Fly from Mendoza
24	Jan 8	Arrive home

### Included in expedition cost:

- Private transportation from airport to hostel or hotel
- Two (2) hostel or hotel nights in Mendoza
- Assistance in obtaining climbing permits
- Private transportation from Mendoza to hotel in Penitentes
- One (1) nights lodging in a hotel in Penitentes (includes breakfast)
- Private transportation from Penitentes to the Punta de Vacas trailhead
- Mules to transport gear to/from base camp (**maximum 45 kg per climber**)
- Base camp services in Plaza Argentina including mess tent (when available) storage tent for use while at the higher camps and toilet tent
- Radio for permanent communication between base camp, Mendoza and Puente del Inca to be able to coordinate different logistical issues, reservations and. when necessary, rescues or evacuations
- Private transportation from Penitentes back to the hostel or hotel in Mendoza
- Two (2) hostel or hotel nights in Mendoza after climb
- Private transportation to airport



### Not included in expedition cost:

- Airfare and airport taxes to and from Mendoza
- Bus tickets to and from Mendoza
- Climbing permits for Aconcagua Park
- Food and drink
- Personal porters
- Gear
- Extra costs as a result of abandoning of the expedition
- Medical or traveler's insurance
- Costs as a result of an emergency rescue (helicopter evacuation is covered by your climbing permit if requested by the medical doctor at base camp)
- Personal expenses (drinks, laundry, mail, telephone calls and other items not mentioned above)
- All other services not listed as Included in costs above



### Please Note

Although an experienced climber will lead this expedition this is NOT a guided climb. As experienced mountaineers, every climber must be self-reliant on the mountain. As the expedition leader I will advise teams before and during the expedition as much as possible but only your partners will be available to descend with you should you require it. It is highly recommended that climbers join this expedition in teams of two or more although solo climbers, climbing in pure soloist style, are welcome and may pair up with other solo climbers on the expedition.

### Physical Conditioning

This is a high-altitude mountain expedition. Do not treat it as a walk-up. High camp is located at over 19,300 feet and you could be there for up to six (6) days. I cannot stress enough that this climb is demanding and exhausting, on both a physical and mental level. It is important that you be in strong condition to maximize your experience. It is not uncommon to carry over 70 pounds while climbing down from Camp 2 to Base Camp so be sure to include wearing a 40-50 pound pack while training.

### Gear

Please review the suggested equipment list. For time spent in town I recommend casual clothing (T-shirt, shorts, etc), as the climate in Mendoza is typically similar to that of Los Angeles, California. For the hike to Plaza Argentina, light-coloured tops and convertible pants do well in the hot sun. Duffle bags see a considerable amount of abuse while on the trail so purchase high quality bags made out of heavy fabric. Please note that climbing gear is available for purchase in Argentina, however, it is very expensive so be sure to bring all the items that you need with you. If you have any gear-related, questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

CLOTHING	TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT	OTHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hat (to keep sun off head and neck)</li> <li>• Toque and/or balaclava</li> <li>• Pair of liner gloves</li> <li>• Pair waterproof technical gloves</li> <li>• Pair of down mittens</li> <li>• 3 Pairs of liner socks</li> <li>• 2 Pairs of mid-weight socks</li> <li>• 3 Pairs of heavy-weight socks</li> <li>• Sandals or neoprene boots (no flip-flops)</li> <li>• Down booties (optional)</li> <li>• 2 Light-weight underwear</li> <li>• 2 Polypropylene light-weight tops</li> <li>• 1 Pair of light hiking pants</li> <li>• Light-weight top and bottom</li> <li>• Mid-weight top and bottom</li> <li>• Soft shell jacket (optional)</li> <li>• Soft shell pants (optional)</li> <li>• Fleece jacket and pants (optional)</li> <li>• Gore-Tex Jacket</li> <li>• Gore-Tex pants</li> <li>• Down jacket (Primaloft or 700 fill down)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tent</li> <li>• Stove(s), fuel, spare pump &amp; repair kit</li> <li>• Cooking pot (small)</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Water purification drops</li> <li>• Bowl, mug and spoon</li> <li>• Large Ziploc and garbage bags</li> <li>• Repair kit (optional)</li> <li>• GPS (optional), compass and map</li> <li>• Pair of plastic double boots</li> <li>• Pair of trekking boots or running shoes</li> <li>• Pair of gaiters or super gaiters</li> <li>• Large backpack (80+ liters)</li> <li>• Small summit pack (30+ liters)</li> <li>• Sleeping bag (-20°C or 0°F minimum)</li> <li>• Thermarest and repair kit</li> <li>• Closed cell foam pad (2 for comfort)</li> <li>• Trekking pole(s)</li> <li>• Glacier glasses and goggles</li> <li>• Headlamp with spare batteries</li> <li>• 2 water bottles + parkas (1 liter each)</li> <li>• Pee bottle (1 liter)</li> <li>• Crampons</li> <li>• Mountain axe</li> </ul> <p>For Polish Glacier routes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ice axe(s)</li> <li>• Harness</li> <li>• 2 ice screws</li> <li>• Picket (24")</li> <li>• 4 wire gate carabiners</li> <li>• 2 locking carabiners</li> <li>• 3 short 6-millimeter cords – 5 M</li> <li>• Slings (2-24" and 1-48")</li> <li>• Belay device, pulley, Tibloc</li> <li>• Rope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small duffel bag with lock (for plane)</li> <li>• Large duffel bags with lock (for mules)</li> <li>• Hand and toe warmers (optional)</li> <li>• Towel (travel-style, optional)</li> <li>• Personal hygiene and first aid kits</li> <li>• Kleenex, toilet paper (3), hand sanitizer</li> <li>• Alcohol free baby wipes (2 packages)</li> <li>• Lighters (3)</li> <li>• MP3 player (optional)</li> <li>• Ear plugs (optional)</li> <li>• Leatherman knife</li> <li>• Journal and pen (optional)</li> <li>• Camera, film, etc</li> <li>• Sun block and lip balm</li> <li>• Book (optional)</li> <li>• Spare sunglasses</li> <li>• Altimeter watch (optional)</li> <li>• Money (small \$US for purchasing food)</li> <li>• Valid passport</li> </ul>

**Note**

The information contained in this package is subject to change at any time and is only a guide. Climbers can use this information along with their personal experience to determine what clothing, technical and personal gear to pack.

**Dressing**

For the walk to base camp wear a pair of light-weight synthetic underwear, a pair of liner and light-hiker socks, comfortable trekking boots or trail running shoes, light-coloured convertible pants or shorts, a light-coloured polypropylene shirt (long-sleeves work well in the sun), a good hat that also keeps the sun off your neck and a pair of sunglasses.

In base camp and moving between Camp 1 and Camp 2 lightweight underwear, pair of liner and mid-weight socks, light or mid-weight long underwear top and bottom, soft shell jacket and pant, a hat and sunglasses.

Summit day light-weight underwear, pair of liner and heavy-weight socks, a combination of light weight and mid-weight long underwear top and bottom, with or without a fleece jacket and pants (depending on personal comfort and experience), Gore-Tex jacket and pants, down jacket (if required), toque or balaclava and sunglasses or goggles.

# Aconcagua 2009 Expedition

## ● Arrival in Mendoza

- Upon arrival at the El Plumerillo Airport in Mendoza, Argentina, expedition members will travel by private transport to a hostel or hotel downtown. After checking in and hauling bags to our rooms we can relax after spending the past 20+ hours in the air. Later we will enjoy the bright sunshine and warm air walking through downtown Mendoza where we will eat, drink, and soak up the blend of Latin culture and European atmosphere. Excitement starts to build as the adventure begins.



## ● Day in Mendoza

- Today we travel to the tourism office to fill out the necessary paperwork, pay our fee, and obtain our climbing permits. After registering, we can stop at a supermarket to pick up any last minute food items. Back at the hostel or hotel, we will do a final gear check and pack for the ride to Penitentes. This may also be a day of grace for any climbers whose luggage may have gone astray, it is not nice but it happens. At night, we again enjoy the local atmosphere spending our last day in town with good company, wine, and food.



## ● Travel to Penitentes (7,600')

- In the morning, we will have a quiet breakfast before a private shuttle arrives to transport us to Penitentes. This is a three-hour drive through the countryside in the Andes Mountains. Upon arrival, we check into the hotel and drop off our gear with the mule service provider. This is a good time to begin acclimatizing and it is highly recommended that climbers ascend the hill across the road reaching 9,000 to 10,000' depending on your conditioning. After returning, we can grab a hot shower and sit down to a delicious meal.



## ● Rio Vacas to Pampa Lenas (5-6 hrs, 8,860 ft)

- After breakfast at the hotel, our mule service provider will transport us to the Vacas Valley trailhead. Despite what guidebooks might say this is a long first day in the hot, dry environment. Although we do not gain much altitude, make sure you bring 2 liters of water along with your mountain jacket, lunch, river footwear, sunscreen, and trekking pole(s) for the 14-kilometer walk. When we arrive at Pampa Lenas we will check in with the park rangers and receive our numbered trash and human waste bags (do not lose it or else you could pay a hefty fine).



## ● Pampa Lenas to Casa Piedra (6-7 hrs, 10,500 ft)

- This is another long, hot 15-kilometer day of trekking with a little more gain in altitude. There is water along the way but you will want to make sure to treat before drinking. The scenery is fantastic as we follow the Rio Vacas but landslides have covered portions of the trail. Just before arriving at Pampa Lenas, we get our first view of Aconcagua, the mountain we have come to climb. At the junction of the Relinchos and Rio Vacas rivers, we camp for the night and rest up for our final trek in to base camp.



## ● Casa Piedra to Plaza Argentina (5-6 hrs, 13,800 ft)

- Although a slightly shorter hike of 12 kilometers we gain almost 3,000 feet in altitude, over 10,000 feet and some climbers will begin to feel the effects of altitude. This is an interesting section of the trek as we must cross two rivers by foot, a section of glacier that seemingly appears out of nowhere and scramble up a large hill. When we arrive at base camp, we will find tent sites, relax in the mess tent, and check in with the park rangers and medical doctor for a blood pressure and O<sub>2</sub> saturation test.



## ● Base Camp to Camp 1 (3 days, 4-5 hrs, 16,400 ft)

- Our first full day at base camp will be a rest day where we will again stop in the medical tent for a second medical check. The following day we ascend the trail to Camp 1 to drop off supplies and return to base camp. There are many routes to follow through what is known as the "mine field" that could lead you in the wrong direction and make it difficult to get to or return from Camp 1. After the mine field climbers must ascend the penitentes (ice formations) that can be difficult and strenuous to navigate through. The third day of this leg we move to Camp 1 and enjoy the view. This schedule ensures we follow the proven 1,000 feet of ascent per day for good acclimatization.



### ● **Camp 1 to Camp 2 (3 days, 4-5 hrs, 19,200 ft)**

- The first full day at Camp 1 will again be a rest day and a time for us to prepare from the next camp. The following day will undoubtedly be one of the most physically difficult days on the mountain as we carry heavy loads over 19,000' on steep terrain and scree and return to Camp 1. On the third day, we again pack up and move to Camp 2 where we will prepare for our summit attempt. Camping here is a test of your determination, as the constant wind never seems to abate.



### ● **Camp 2 to Summit (up to 4 days, 10-14 hrs, 22,840 ft)**

- The first day at Camp 2 we again use as a rest day to prepare for the summit push. On summit day, we will rise at 4:00 and be climbing by 5:00 AM. It can be relatively cold but you will warm up once on either the Polish Glacier or False Polish Traverse routes. For the Direct it is up, up and away. For those on the traverse you can climb to the Independencia Hut (21,000'), traverse the Gran Acarreo (windy), and ascend the Canaleta, the steepest portion of the route. Depending on the weather, you could be at Camp 2 for five days so bring a book.



### ● **Camp 2 to Mendoza (3 days)**

- Today is the heaviest carry day of the whole trip but your acclimatization allows you to carry a heavy pack easier than you thought it would be. In two hours, you will descend to Camp 1 and 3-4 hours later be back at Base Camp. After a good night sleep (and maybe a few celebratory beers) we'll pack our duffels the following morning, check out with the rangers, turn over our trash and head out with light packs on a 27 kilometer hike to Pampa Lenas. The following day we walk 4 hours to Penitentes where our mule service provider will transport us back to the hostel or hotel in Mendoza.



### ● **Day in Mendoza and the Flight Home (2 days)**

- Today we get to enjoy Mendoza for a whole day shopping and eating, eating, eating. We may even celebrate a little and enjoy a last dinner together. The following day we will still have time in Mendoza to tie-up any loose ends and pack our gear before private transportation picks us up and takes us to the airport. Sad times though as the adventure ends.

